



MEDIA ADVISORY

Date: September 8, 2003

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Baytown Nature Center Management Team (TX) Receives 2003 Coastal America Spirit Award

WHAT: The Baytown Nature Center Management Team will be presented the 2003 Coastal America Spirit Award. The Project restoring a condemned neighborhood to its natural wetlands habitat.

WHO: Receiving awards: The City of Baytown, Texas; Galveston Bay Estuary Program; Galveston Bay Foundation; TX Parks and Wildlife; TX General Lands Office; US Fish & Wildlife Service; Lyondell Chemical Company; ExxonMobil; Chevron Phillips Chemical Company; and Crouch Environmental Services.

Photo opportunities and interviews on site.

WHERE: In conjunction with Southeast Watershed Forum and Southern States Environmental Conference, Mississippi Coastal Coliseum and Convention Center, Biloxi, MS

WHEN: Tuesday, September 23, 2003

BACKGROUND:

The Coastal America Partnership created the awards program in 1997 in an effort to recognize outstanding efforts to protect, preserve and restore coastal resources. The Coastal America Spirit Award recognizes teams whose efforts demonstrate the Coastal America spirit of teamwork and are poised to address our challenging coastal issues but have not yet matured or are limited in scope.

The City of Baytown and its partners took a condemned neighborhood, which had been plagued with flooding, and restored it to its natural wetlands habitat. Mitigation projects, grants, donations, volunteers and even a local sales tax have made the Baytown Nature Center a reality. To date, the City of Baytown and the members of the Baytown Nature Center Management Team have generated more than \$4 million for the Baytown Nature Center, which officially opened in 1991. Four freshwater ponds were created, and 60 acres of marsh were planted. Several additional marsh-planting projects have been completed, for a grand total of approximately 80 acres. This project restored a 450-acre area to its natural wetland state, thus providing critical habitat for innumerable species. The City of Baytown, through its Eddie V. Gray Wetlands Center, has two outstanding educational programs that regularly utilize the Baytown Nature Center.